



LaBarque Creek Conservation Area: Now Bigger and Better!

The LaBarque Creek Conservation Area in Jefferson County was originally purchased in 2006 and totaled 505 acres. Several recent land acquisitions have allowed the Department of Conservation to more than double the size of this area, which is now 1,270 acres! The area is comprised of rugged glades, forested hills and steep, narrow valleys, canyons, bluffs and shelter caves carved into St. Peter sandstone. A 3-mile natural surface hiking trail is located in the north-central portion of the area and meanders through forest, woodland, and glade habitats on the area. This trail is rated moderate to difficult due to some steep sections of trail. The trail is signed in a clockwise direction, and provides scenic views of the rugged landscape, including seasonal waterfalls, shelter caves and sandstone glades. The abundance of seasonal waterfalls found here is unique in the St. Louis area. If you are feeling more adventurous and are comfortable with navigating off the trail, bring along a map and compass or GPS unit and explore the wonders of the LaBarque wilderness.



Winter is an ideal time to explore this conservation area, especially if there is snow cover. You will likely find tracks left by deer and turkeys as they search for food sources on the landscape. If you are lucky, you may cross the tracks left by a raccoon, fox, or bobcat! When winter sets in and we have extended periods of below freezing conditions, the seasonal waterfalls can produce some truly amazing natural ice sculptures.



If springtime is more your favorite time of the year, don't fret, because the spring wildflower bouquet provided by Mother Nature on the LaBarque Creek Conservation Area will soon begin! You may find some early spring bloomers such as spring beauty, bloodroot, Dutchman's breeches, and bluebells as soon as March.

Whatever time of year you decide to explore the LaBarque Creek Conservation Area, you will be amazed by the natural resources the area has to offer just outside our backdoor in northern Jefferson County!

BY JOHN VOGEL, Wildlife Management Biologist

Jay Henges Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center

1100 Antire Road, High Ridge, MO 63049 • mdc.mo.gov/node/299



From the east/St. Louis
I-44 west to Beaumont Antire Road, exit 269.
Left over highway 44 to Antire Road. Right on
Antire. One hundred feet to entrance. Left into
driveway.

From the west/Eureka
I-44 east to Beaumont Antire Road, exit 269.
Follow exit lane around to top.

HOURS:

May 1–August 31
Wednesday: 1–7:30 PM
Thursday–Sunday: 10 AM–4:30 PM
September 1–April 30
Wednesday–Sunday: 10 AM–4:30 PM

Programs are free. Call **636-938-9548** or email henges.range@mdc.mo.gov with your name and phone number to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice.

Basic Handgun, Part 1 & 2

Jan 3 and 5 • Thursday • 6–8 PM
and • Saturday • 8–9:30 AM

(Ages 16 and up)

This program will include handgun operation, shooting fundamentals, and safe storage. We start with a classroom session on Thursday evening, then a live-fire session on Saturday morning. Although equipment and ammunition will be provided, you may bring your own. Anyone under age 18 must be accompanied by an adult. (Reservations begin December 3.)

Trigger Time–Handgun

Jan 12 • Saturday • 8:30–9:30 AM

(Ages 18 and up)

Trigger Time is “hands-on” personal instruction designed to make you a better marksman. There is no classroom time, just expert one-on-one instruction from one of our highly qualified staff. Participants are required to provide their own handguns and ammunition (at least 100 rounds). This is not a beginners class. (Reservations begin December 12.)

Metallic Cartridge Reloading

Jan 16 • Wednesday • 6:30–8:30 PM

(Ages 16 and up)

Now that factory rifle ammunition may cost \$35 or more per box, it is worth the time and effort to learn how to reload your own rifle ammunition. We will demonstrate the simple, low cost basic equipment needed for reloading rifle cartridges, and the easy methods of producing quality, accurate ammunition. (Reservations begin December 16.)

Shotshell Reloading

Jan 23 • Wednesday • 6:30–8:30 PM

(Ages 16 and up)

Due to the rising cost of shotshell ammunition, here is your opportunity to learn the inexpensive process of reloading shotgun shells using simple equipment. The technique is easy and will save you money over the cost of factory ammunition. This is a hands-on learning class; we'll produce quality shotshells with low-cost equipment. (Reservations begin December 23.)

Jay Henges Shooting Range attains 4-star rating from the NSSF

The Missouri Department of Conservation's (MDC) Jay Henges Shooting Range has received the enviable 4-star rating from the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF). According to the NSSF announcement, the Jay Henges Range was awarded the rating because the range “introduced new features, and improved on existing conditions, while extending hours and building staff.”

The NSSF went on to commend the range, stating that “the resulting customer service, solid accountability and active communication have raised annual traffic to more than 40,000, making it one of the most visited public shooting ranges in the Midwest.”

“The NSSF is the trade association for the firearms industry,” said Jake Hindman, Jay Henges Shooting Range Supervisor, “and it’s an honor for them to give their stamp of approval.”

Some of the accomplishments that have distinguished the Henges Shooting Range include expanding its hours of operation, creating a 15-target 3-D walk through archery range, and increasing educational programs for the public. Henges also underwent a complete rifle and pistol range renovation giving it state-of-the-art safety features and the capacity to capture and recycle all projectiles fired.

Busch Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center

2360 Hwy D, St. Charles, MO 63304 • mdc.mo.gov/node/270

Predator Hunting Clinic

Jan 16 • Wednesday • 6-9 PM

(Ages 8 and up with a parent or adult)

Come join us as we cover all aspects of coyote and bobcat hunting in Missouri. This class covers the tactics and techniques for hunting these elusive predators. This clinic will be held in the classrooms at the August A. Busch Conservation Area Regional Office. (Reservations begin December 17.)



Bobcat

Youth Rabbit Clinic and Hunt

Jan 26 • Saturday • 9 AM-1 PM

(Ages 8 and up with a parent or adult)

This program will cover how to safely and successfully hunt rabbits in Missouri. We will start with a clinic at the August A. Busch Conservation Area Regional Office classrooms. The clinic will cover safety, habitat and hunting techniques. After the clinic, we will head out to the field for an actual rabbit hunt. For the hunt, Hunter Education certification and hunter orange is required. We will have some vests on site for those who do not have any. (Reservations begin December 26.)

Basic Handgun for Women

Jan 30 and 31 • Wednesday • and •

Thursday • 6-9 PM

(Ages 13 and up)

This program is designed to teach students how to safely and successfully handle and shoot a handgun. We will cover topics such as safety, various actions, calibers, grip, stance, and sight picture. On Wednesday night the class will be held in the classrooms at the August A. Busch Conservation Area Regional Office. Then on Thursday evening, dress for the weather as we will meet at the Busch Shooting Range for some live fire practice. We will provide the firearms and ammunition. Those under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. (Reservations begin December 28.)



From I-64/40 take Hwy 94 south to Hwy D; turn west on Hwy D for approximately 5 miles. The area entrance is on the south side of Hwy D.

HOURS:

December 1–March 31

Monday, Tuesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday: 10 AM–4 PM

April 1–November 30

Monday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday: 10 AM–4 PM and Tuesday: 2–8 PM

Programs are free. Call **(636) 441-4554**

Monday through Friday 8 AM–5 PM.

If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on our waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice.

Youth Hunter Education Challenge

(Ages 11-18)

Every two weeks from January to June, join the best group of new hunters around the St. Charles area. They meet early Saturday mornings at the August A. Busch Conservation Area.

The Youth Hunter Education Challenge (YHEC) is the premier hunter education event in Missouri. Each year young hunter education graduates come together to advance their skills and knowledge in an exciting experience that incorporates many of the situations encountered while hunting. The program offers a chance to build on the skills that were introduced in the hunter education classroom. The Missouri Youth Hunter Education Challenge also gives hunter education instructors and volunteer coaches an opportunity to help make tomorrow's hunters more skilled and responsible.

The annual state championship is held in the spring or early summer offering the opportunity to experience the eight challenges of YHEC.

Those interested should call Frank Scott, Head Coach, at: 636-673-1283 or fsyhec@yahoo.com.

Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center

11715 Cragwold Road, Kirkwood, MO 63122 • mdc.mo.gov/node/271



The Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center is located in Kirkwood, MO. Take Highway 44 east to the Watson Road exit and turn left on Geyer. Cross over the bridge and turn left on Cragwold Road. Follow for one mile to the entrance. Enjoy nature exhibits, attend programs, purchase hunting and fishing permits, browse through a nature-related gift shop, and pick up free conservation brochures. Outdoors, enjoy three miles of hiking trails through oak hickory forest.

Building: Tuesday–Saturday: 8 AM–5 PM

Trails: Daily: 8 AM–8 PM DST

8 AM–6 PM CST

Programs are free. Call **314-301-1500** to register. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice.

Discover Nature Families: Scat Attack

Jan 10 • Thursday • 5:30–7 PM

(Families ages 6 and up)

Poo, a disgustingly cool topic that scientists, doctors, and people study to keep our world healthy! Become a scatologist and discover the benefits of scat identification. What is scat? How do we use scat? The results can be very surprising! (Reservations begin December 27.)

Tracks!

Jan 11 • Friday • 10–11 AM

(Ages 3–6)

Which animal left those tracks? What was it doing? Discover what you can learn from footprints! We'll identify the tracks of many Missouri animals and investigate some track stories. If the weather permits, we will venture outside, so please dress warmly. (Reservations begin December 28.)

Junior Audubon: Feeding Feathered Friends

Jan 12 • Saturday • 10–11:30 AM

(Ages 7–14)

Do birds like some types of seeds better than others? What is the best type of bird feeder to use? Join us for another special joint program of the St. Louis Jr. Audubon and the Missouri Department of Conservation as we play "Feeder Frenzy" and look at "Grizzly Gizzards." We will also use recycled materials to make our own bird feeders and observe wild birds in action. (Reservations begin December 28.)

You and Me under the Canopy

Jan 15 • Tuesday • 10–11 AM

(Ages birth–8)

Families, meet in the nature center lobby at 10 a.m. for a "nature" adventure. Make sure to dress for the weather because we won't be in the building long. Everyone will hike with the naturalist to a special place in the forest and enjoy a nature story under the canopy. (Registration is not required. Siblings are welcome! In case of inclement weather the program will be shortened to 30 minutes.)



Feathers and Flurries

Jan 22 • Tuesday • 9:30–11 AM

(Ages 7 and up)

How do birds survive in the wintertime? We will consider how they stay warm, what they find to eat, and how they get water to drink. Also, what can we do to help the birds survive? We'll discuss the pros and cons of putting up feeders, heated bird baths, and shelters. Then we'll make three simple kinds of feeders to take home. If the weather is good enough we'll finish with an outdoor bird walk. (Reservations begin January 8.)

What Makes a Good Steward?

Jan 24 • Thursday • 12:30–2:30 PM

(Ages 7–12)

Stewardship. What does it mean to you? Are you a careful and responsible steward of your surroundings? Join us as we discuss what it means to be a good steward. We will then practice good stewardship by picking up some trash and possibly removing non-native plant species at Powder Valley Nature Center. Dress for the weather. Rubber gloves and trash bags will be provided. (Reservations begin January 10.)

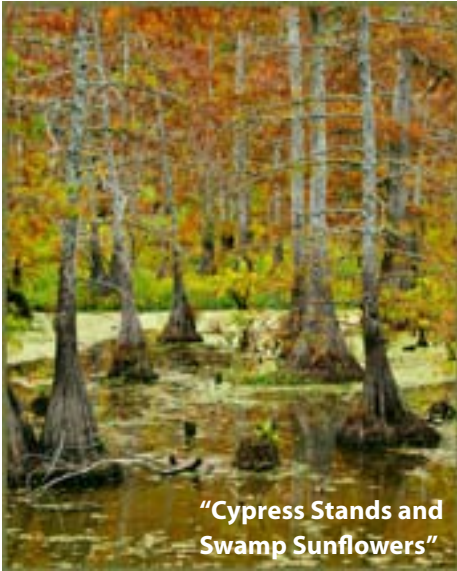
We help people discover nature!

Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center

11715 Cragwold Road, Kirkwood, MO 63122 • mdc.mo.gov/node/271

Powder Valley Hallway Exhibit

Mingo Swamp Photo Contest



**"Cypress Stands and
Swamp Sunflowers"**

Photo courtesy of John F. Doskey

The 7th annual Mingo Swamp Photo Contest offers viewers another look at the wild treasures of Mingo National Wildlife Refuge. The annual contest accepts photos of both wild animals and plants native to Mingo NWR, as well as landscapes taken on the Refuge. Other categories of entry are People-in-Nature and Artistically Enhanced (entries that would qualify in any of the other four categories but have been noticeably enhanced in some way).

The contest deadline for entries each year falls on the first Friday in August. Contest rules and information can be found online and downloaded from The Mingo Swamp Friends website at <http://mingoswampfriends.org>.

The annual contest exhibit travels around the state for month-long exhibits at various MDC Conservation Nature Centers, and shows at Bass Pro Shops Springfield during June. A selection of some of the winning entries can also be seen on the Mingo Swamp Friends Facebook page.



"The Heron"

Photo courtesy of Christine Anthony

Powder Valley welcomes pallid sturgeon to the large aquarium!



Pallid sturgeon

Pallid sturgeon is an endangered fish species occurring in the Missouri and lower Mississippi rivers. Its numbers have declined because their entire natural habitat has been adversely affected by people. Impoundments, channelization and dams have altered the river's natural structure. Two sturgeons came to Powder Valley from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's species recovery program. They were raised in a hatchery and many were tagged and released, some in Missouri. Visit the two newest members of our fish population and learn more about them at the nature center. Missourians care about conserving forests, fish and wildlife, and creating and maintaining a diversity of species and habitat is critical to the pallid sturgeon's success.

Columbia Bottom Conservation Area

801 Strodtman Road, St. Louis, MO 63138 • mdc.mo.gov/node/298



From I-270 north, take the Riverview Drive exit (last Missouri exit); go north 2.8 miles. Riverview Drive becomes Columbia Bottom Road at its intersection with Larimore Road. The entrance is on the right-hand side.

OFFICE HOURS:

Wednesday–Friday: 8 AM–5 PM

Saturday–Sunday: 8 AM–4 PM

Programs are free. Call 314-877-6014 to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice.

Scoping Out Raptors

Jan 19 and 20 • Saturday • and • Sunday • 10 AM–2 PM

(All ages)

Birds of prey come in numerous shapes and sizes and exhibit a variety of hunting techniques. There is one thing they all have in common: all are enjoyable to watch. Join us at Columbia Bottom Conservation Area, where a variety of raptors are known to be at this time of year. Scopes will be set up at the Confluence Platform, near parking lot “N,” where America’s favorite raptor usually hangs out. (No reservations required.)

Beginner Photography

Jan 20 • Sunday • 8-10 AM

(Ages 15 and up)

Do you have a camera and enjoy taking pictures? Do you love the natural world? Then this program is for you. Join us while the light is good, for a beginner’s session in photography. We’ll discuss techniques inside the Visitor Center before venturing to the Confluence where we’ll look for wild photo ops, like the bald eagle. (Reservations begin January 5.)

Regal Eagles

Jan 21 • Monday • 1-2:45 PM

(All ages)

Winter has come to Missouri and so have the eagles! Did you know the bald eagle became our national emblem in 1782? What adaptations make these magnificent birds so special? Let’s learn about eagles including how their populations have made a tremendous comeback. We will help you discover nature by sharing with you some of the best spots for eagle viewing. Stay for the Eagle Explorations program to tour Columbia Bottom in search of live eagles in action. (Reservations begin January 9.)

Eagle Explorations

Jan 21 • Monday • 3-4:30 PM

(All ages)

Winter is an excellent time in Missouri to see bald eagles gathered along open waters. . Enjoy a drive around the area as we search for these majestic birds along the rivers. Don’t forget to dress warmly! Come early for the Regal Eagles program to learn some interesting facts about these birds and their unique adaptations. (Reservations begin January 9.)

Forest Park Office

5595 Grand Drive, St. Louis, MO 63112 • mdc.mo.gov/node/272



From I-44 take Kingshighway north to West Pine Blvd, turn left. Follow West Pine to Lindell, turn left. Continue on Lindell past Union Dr. to Cricket, turn left. Take first right onto Grand Ave. The visitor’s center is on the right.

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday–Friday: 8 AM–5 PM

Programs are free. Call 314-877-1309 to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice.

Our Beloved Bald Eagle

Jan 30 • Wednesday • 9:30-10:30 AM

(Ages 3-6)

Not only is our national symbol beautiful, the bald eagle is brilliant at fishing. Learn about eyesight, nest building skills, and how to distinguish adult eagle from an immature eagle. We’ll watch a short video of their skills in action. (Reservations begin January 15.)

August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area

2360 Hwy D, St. Charles, MO 63304 • mdc.mo.gov/node/300

Dresser Island Conservation Area Hike

Jan. 5 • Saturday • 9 AM-3 PM

(Adults)

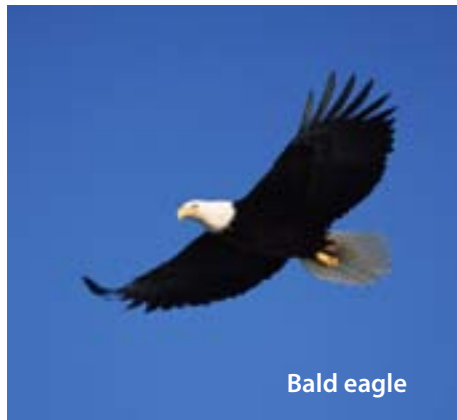
Where is there a place in winter that you can hike along a big river and see pelicans, ducks, geese, eagles, hawks, gulls, herons, turkey, deer, muskrat houses, beaver lodges, small birds and possibly trumpeter swans? It's called Dresser Island and is located near West Alton in north St. Charles County. Join us for a 6½ mile hike as we look for wildlife along the Mississippi River and enjoy the winter scenery that our big rivers offer so near to St. Louis. The level of difficulty of the hike depends on trail conditions. If the trail is dry, the effort would be considered a "Moderate." If there is ice, snow or wet conditions, the effort will be "Strenuous." Interested in seeing what Dresser Island has to offer? See this link for photos from a February 2012 hike: <http://buschrockwoods.smugmug.com/Other/Dresser-Island-Hike-18-Feb> (Reservations begin December 21.)

Amazing Eagles

Jan. 5 • Saturday • 9:30-10:30 AM

(Ages 3-5)

Did you know your preschooler might be roughly the same height as the bald eagle and half their wingspan? We'll discover what makes our national symbol special through activities, a craft and a story. (Reservations begin December 21.)



Bald eagle

Discover Nature: Use a Compass to Point Your Way

Jan. 19 • Saturday • 1-3:30 PM

(Families ages 10 and up)

The skills of map and compass reading are valuable in everyday life and many outdoor activities. Those families who hike, bike, hunt, fish or backpack into remote areas should consider map reading and compass use as basic first aid knowledge. This basic skills lesson is aimed at teaching how to use a map and compass together so these skills can be applied when your family ventures into natural areas. (Reservations begin December 28.)

Owl Prowl

Jan 26 • Saturday • 6:30-8 PM

(Families all ages)

Being in the woods at night is an adventure. Ever wonder "who's" awake while you're sleeping? Come learn about owls and we'll take a short hike in hopes of hearing one call back. Effort = Mild. (Reservations begin December 28.)



From I-64/40 take Hwy 94 south to Hwy D; turn west on D for approximately two miles. The area entrance is on the north side of Hwy D.

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday-Friday: 8 AM-5 PM

Programs are free. Call **636-441-4554** to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice.

Volunteer milestones

Gladys Kullman	3,000 hours
Marvin Staloch	4,000 hours



Barred owl

Photo courtesy of Erin Shank

Rockwoods Reservation

2751 Glencoe Road, Wildwood, MO 63038 • mdc.mo.gov/node/272



From I-44 take Hwy 109 north 4 miles to Woods Ave. left on Woods Ave., then immediately right on Glencoe RD. From Manchester Road take Hwy 109 south 2 miles to Woods Ave; right on Woods Ave, then immediately right on Glencoe Road.

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday–Friday: 8 AM–5 PM

Programs are free. Call **636-458-2236** to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days

Owl Prowl

Jan 11 • Friday • 6:30-8:00 PM

(Families)

Who's that hooting it up during the night in January? Owls, that's who. Come learn what makes owls such effective night time hunters and why they hoot so much this time of year. We will also discuss why it's so important that we protect these incredible birds and their habitat. Please dress for the weather as we'll venture outside to look and listen for these elusive nocturnal predators. We will be focusing on those owls you might see or hear in Missouri. (Reservations begin December 28.)

Winter Walk in the Woods

Jan 12 • Saturday • 1-3:30 PM

(Families)

Got cabin fever? Get outdoors to help celebrate the start of Rockwoods 75th birthday year by taking a winter hike on the Rock Quarry Trail. With the trees bare you will see a totally different Rockwoods, and be better able to spot wild animals and scars of man's presence over 100 years ago. We will talk about the history of Rockwoods and the conservation efforts over the past 75 years that have made Rockwoods the incredible place it is today. The 2.2 mile trail gradually gains then loses about 200 ft. of elevation as it passes up and over one of the hills in Rockwoods. This will be a great way to spend a winter afternoon. Effort = Moderate. (Reservations begin December 28.)

Backyard Maple Sugaring-Landowners and Homeowners

Jan 24 • Thursday • 10 AM-2 PM

(Adults)

So you've got maple trees and you love maple syrup... put the two together and you've got Backyard Maple Sugaring! Join this program and learn how to develop your very own backyard maple syrup and maple sugar operation. You'll learn to identify maple trees, details of tree tapping, cooking methods and finishing your sap into syrup. Join the growing community of maple sugaring enthusiasts and gain experience in every step of the process by working with our naturalists. (Reservations begin January 10.)

Backyard Maple Sugaring-Tree Tapping for Homeschool Families

Jan 25 • Friday • 10 AM-noon

(Families)

Maple Sugaring is here and it's time to tap the trees! Join this program to make maple syrup fun for your family, even with just one or two trees at home. You will learn about sugar maple trees, how to tap trees and what equipment to use to turn sap into syrup. Please dress for the weather as much of the program is conducted outdoors in the sugar bush. (Reservations begin January 11.)

Backyard Maple Sugaring-Landowners and Homeowners

Jan. 26 • Saturday • 10 AM-2 PM.

(Adults)

So you've got maple trees and you love maple syrup... put the two together and you've got Backyard Maple Sugaring! Join this program and learn how to develop your very own backyard maple syrup and maple sugar operation. You'll learn to identify maple trees, details of tree tapping, cooking methods and finishing your sap into syrup. Join the growing community of maple sugaring enthusiasts and gain experience in every step of the process by working with our naturalists. (Reservations begin January 11.)

Save the date!

Maple Sugar Festival
at Rockwoods Reservation
Saturday, February 2.